

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2195

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, April 4, 2003

Title: An act relating to state academic standards.

Brief Description: Regarding state assessment standards.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives McDermott, Talcott, Quall, Tom and Haigh).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 3/26/03, 4/4/03 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Johnson, Chair; Zarelli, Vice Chair; Carlson, Finkbeiner and Schmidt.

Minority Report: Do not pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Eide and McAuliffe.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: In 1993, the Legislature required the development of student academic content standards, also known as the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), which are what K-12 students should know and be able to do. EALRs have been adopted in the content areas of reading, writing, communication, mathematics, science, social studies, arts, and health and fitness.

Additionally, the Legislature required the development of assessments, also known as the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), to assess the EALRs. Currently, the WASL is administered in grades 4, 7, and 10 in reading, writing, communication, and mathematics, and in grades 8 and 10 in science. Beginning in 2005, the science assessment will be administered in grade 5. There is a timeline for the future development of assessments at the elementary, middle and high school levels in social studies, the arts, and health and fitness. The Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission identifies the "cut-scores" that students must achieve on the WASL.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) may modify the EALRs and the WASL but must, upon request, provide opportunities for the legislative committees on education to review the proposed modifications before they are adopted.

Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, beginning in 2005, states must annually assess all students in grades 3 through 8 on the state academic content standards in reading and mathematics and assess at least once in grades 10 through 12. Additionally, by 2007,

states must assess all students at least once in grades 3 through 5, once in grades 6 through 9, and once in grades 10 through 12 on the state academic content standards in science. The act requires individual student reports that provide detailed student achievement information as soon as is practicably possible after the assessment is given so that students, parents, teachers and principals can address the specific academic needs of students. The act also requires the state to make widely available information on the achievement of students on the academic assessments required for all students, including disaggregated results for certain categories of students.

Summary of Amended Bill: A timeline is provided for SPI to review and prioritize the EALRs and identify grade level expectations, with an emphasis on depth over breadth and in a sequence that is logical, to be assessed on the WASL and used for state or federal accountability purposes. Additionally, if funded, SPI must report the results of independent research on the alignment and technical review of all levels of the WASL in reading, writing, and science.

The timeline for the development of statewide assessments in communication, social studies, the arts and health and fitness is deleted. School districts are given permissive authority to locally design, administer, score and report on classroom-based assessments in these content areas.

By September 2006, the reading and mathematics student assessment results must be reported in a format so that the academic gain of a student from one school year to the next may be determined. By November 30, 2004, SPI must report the feasibility of returning the results of the WASL in the same school year in which the assessment is administered. Beginning in 2006, the math results must be returned before June 1. SPI must provide as much individual student achievement information as possible to assist teachers and parents to provide support to students.

By November 30, 2006, if funded, the Academic and Accountability Commission must report on the results of the commission's review of the student performance scores needed to meet all grade level content standards on the WASL, including a schedule for the regular review and adjustment of the cut scores. The commission must present any changes to the legislative education committees by January 31, so that the Legislature may take statutory action, if deemed necessary.

RCW 28A.655.060 is repealed. Language in that statute that is not already duplicated elsewhere in RCW 28A is added, except for the requirement for SBE to determine validity and reliability and one sentence addressing educational pathways.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: A timeline is provided for the review and prioritization of the EALRs: Reading, writing, math and science by 2004; social studies by 2005; the arts by 2006; health and fitness by 2007. Instead of SPI making recommendations about the Goal II assessments, local school districts may locally design, administer, score and report on classroom-based assessments for social studies, arts, and health and fitness. The math WASL results must be returned before June 1 beginning in 2006. The reporting requirement to report only students who are continuously enrolled is deleted. The term "cut score" is changed to "student performance scores." The commission must present any changes to student performance scores to the legislative education

committees by January 31, so that the Legislature may take statutory action if deemed necessary. RCW 28A.655.060 is repealed and language from that statute that is not already duplicated elsewhere in RCW 28A is added, except for the requirement for SBE to determine validity and reliability and one sentence addressing educational pathways.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on engrossed substitute bill on March 18, 2003.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill will help teachers because it will bring clarity and focus to the system through prioritization which will improve instruction. Currently, the EALRs are too broad and leave too much open to local interpretation. Prioritization will also help protect the content areas that are not tested on the WASL. To be fair, the assessment results should be returned in the same year, only be reported on students who are continuously enrolled, and show whether the student has made adequate yearly progress. We support keeping the arts as a mandatory WASL area. Delaying the decision on the goal II assessments is sound because there is not consensus in the field regarding the appropriate way to assess these content areas. The Governor would like Goal II assessments to be voluntary and classroom-based but developed at the state level, with a mini-WASL for civics.

Concerns: Scores of all students should be reported, not just a subset of students. The federal government will not permit the state to report only students who are continuously enrolled. Parents are concerned about the goal II assessments becoming optional. If the prioritization of the EALRs only identifies those that will be tested, then the review and prioritization is too narrow.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Quall, Representative Talcott, prime sponsors; Ann Randall, WEA (pro huge); Sara Dennett, WEA, Mukilteo School District (pro); Darcie Smith, WEA, Monroe School District (pro); Christie Perkins, WA State Special Education Coalition (pro); Jim Meadows, Washington State Council for the Social Studies (pro); Judy Hartmann, Governor's Office (not specified); Bob Butts, Greg Hall, OSPI (pro, concerns); Steve Mullin, WA Round Table (pro w/concerns); Rainer Houser, AWSP (pro); Corrie Nath, Seattle Opera (pro); Patricia Costa Kim, Seattle Symphony (pro); Marcus Pimpleton, Seattle Schools (pro); Carol Taylor Cann, WSPTA (concerns).